THE

"HINDU MESSAGE"

A Weekly Review of Indian and World-Problems from the Hindu Standpoint.

Editors: K Sundararama Aiyar M.A., & T. K. Balasubrahmanya Aiyar B.A.

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The **Hindu Message** stands for

(1) The Maintenance of British supremacy with self-government for India,

(2) Co-operation with the different communities of India without prejudice to Hindu Dharma,

(3) Education of the Hindus as an integral part of the Indian Nation,

(4) Advancement of Material prosperity on a spiritual basis and

(5) Dissemination of pure Hindu Culture.

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A Vision Of India.

THE GANGA—III.

By K. S. Ramaswami Sastri, B.A., B.L.

Sagara, fair Ayodhya's sovereign, vain of power
And wealth and fame and strong imperial might
Performed the holy Asvamedha rite
To prove his world-wide sway and win as dower
A life of rapture sweet in Swarga's bower
Where heavenly Beauty blooms upon the sight
And scents and sounds and sights and splendours bright
Arrive upon the wings of every hour.
Then Indra hid the proudly prancing steed
Which was to wander through the realms of earth
For one full year before the sacrifice.
The Sagaras then dug the earth with speed
In their defiant and presumptuous mirth
And in their mad quest made the oceans rise.

The Hindu Message

THURSDAY EVENING 14, FEB. 1918.

The Viceroy's Opening Speech.

His Excellency Lord Chelmsford's inaugural speech at the present session of the Imperial Legislative Council is, doubtless, a performance which is more valuable for what it implies or leaves unsaid than for what it has put into clear utterance. Of course, the conditions of India and the world to-day render it almost impossible that one occupying so responsible a position as the Viceroy can freely proclaim all that he feels or wishes to say regarding the present position of affairs. The war is still dragging its weary, interminable length, and what the immediate future will bring no one can say. The Russian revolution and the Italian retreat came quite suddenly on us. How events in Turkey and Austria or even in Germany are going to shape themselves no one can confidently predict. Meanwhile much is expected from the vigorous participation of the American forces in the campaign which will commence in vigour on the Western front with the return of spring. If this anticipation is realised, it may do more for the cause of the Allies than any purely internal troubles happening in the enemy countries, or their mutual recriminations and dissensions, can do. In India the Secretary of State's mission is fairly ended, but he still remains with us, apparently pursuing further the aims for which that mission was undertaken. Under such circumstances, it would be absurd to expect that His Excellency Lord Chelmsford can do anything more than issue the message on the present situation contained in his inaugural speech.

We have referred to the significant implications and silences of the speech. First, we must dwell on the topic which is paramount at this moment in the hearts of all Indian politicians, and even of Indians at large,—the question of self-government. To India it is a question of life and death,—not only because, we feel that, until we secure, in full measure, at least the control of our finances, we cannot find enough food for the starving, famished and submerged fourth or third of our people, but also because we feel that we are destitute of the freedom which self government alone can secure to us, as it has done to the Colonies and Dominions of the Empire. We can also have no sense of national self-respect, nor cultivate the strength and spirit which are necessary to entitle us to consideration and respect as partners in the successes and achievements of the Empire. On this question, we think His Excellency would have done well not to have spoken at all, instead of making the semi-cryptic pronouncement contained in his speech. He said:—"I have every hope that the Secretary of State may be able to take home proposals embodying a sane and sober advance with future steps duly outlined so that, provided we get that co-operation on which the announcement of August 20th laid stress, we shall be able to progress towards the realisation of responsible government." This sentence seems to be an ominous confirmation of the leakages which we have had, in the columns of certain Anglo-

Indian papers regarding the agreement or decision arrived at in the Conference of the Provincial Satraps with the Viceroy and the Secretary of State. The Indian people, we feel assured, would not care to receive self-government in minute doles and driblets,—in department after department—as outlined in the scheme of the shadowy and irresponsible politicians of the Round Table. We trust that the Viceregal utterance above quoted means no such thing, and we fear that it will only result in rivetting further our bonds of political enslavement instead of setting us firmly and steadily on the road to freedom. It will also set at large the never-ending, still beginning, but for the moment pent-up, forces of agitation all over the land. The Indian people have ever been inclined towards a settled and peaceful, though not a languid, life. It is the ever-growing suffering, and the uncomplainingly passing away in untold millions, of our people from the effects of starvation, disease, destitution, and famine, and the contemptible treatment accorded to us as a *dependent* nation incapable of self-respect and unfit for self-government that has roused discontent in us and reconciled us to this life of constant agitation and growing unsettlement for an entire generation and more. We appeal to His Excellency the Viceroy and the Secretary of State to give our people the assured prospect of a peaceful life and the sure promise of an uninterrupted record of internal progress, by making over to us such a measure of financial control as will make the Indian executive a factor of Indian national advance such as can be utilised for making this land and its people rich, strong, respected, and free. We appeal to them to remember the dictum of His Honor Sir James Meston, when taking leave of his Council at Allahabad on February 6th, that "with the growth of political liberty, every form of liberty must grow."

In the *second* place, the Viceroy's pronouncements in regard to India's business relations with the United Kingdom do not seem quite satisfactory to us. India has fully recognised the practical exigencies and difficulties of the situation arising from this most destructive, most disheartening, and most dangerous of all wars. The manner in which India has borne its share of the brunt and burden of war has been fully acknowledged on all hands, and so we are entitled to demand that all business relations not only internally within the limits of India, but with the United Kingdom and all other countries, should be regulated according to the soundest principles of economic science, whether they relate to commodities like tea and rice which are "not held to be of essential national importance" or salt and cloth which are of such a kind. His Excellency speaks of prices in regard to tea which will give "a reasonable amount of profit to the gardens in this country," and of prices in regard to rice which will give "a reasonable return alike to the cultivators and millers." Of late there has been a great deal spoken in regard to the necessity of dealing with "profiteering." We trust that His Excellency's pronouncement in regard to what is "reasonable" as profit or return in the tea and rice trades has no reference to "profiteering." To deal rightly and successfully with "profiteering" is a matter of consider-

able difficulty, and may easily result in much individual injustice and hardship. Economic laws must be allowed free scope in a country so exceptionally situated as India. When we have self-government in the full measure now demanded, and especially when we control our economic policy and the power of the purse, we shall be enabled to manage our commercial and industrial interests with the freedom or restraint consistent with so altered a situation.

Why a change has been made in the rules of procedure for the discussion of the financial statement, as announced by His Excellency, has not been made clear to us. They can only be tested in the actual working. The consent and counsel of the non-official members of the Council has not been taken before they are introduced and enforced, and so they seem, *prima facie*, objectionable. But we think that any set of rules can be made to appear reasonable or the reverse by merely discussing them on abstract or *a priori* grounds. Hence, it will be well to wait and see whether the new rules prove beneficial or not to those who have to transact business in the Council on behalf of the public.

Political Crime and Political Agitation.

We have no sympathy with any kind of crime, whether political or non-political. If any one commits murder, or engages in a conspiracy to subvert the Government, or indeed even infringes the existing law, the author of such outrage must be punished according to the provisions of the law. It is simple madness to feel or express any sympathy, simply because the motive underlying the crime is political. We know, indeed, that if a person overthrows the existing authority in armed conflict and the result is a needed change in the system of government, he is honoured with the title of a patriot among his contemporaries, and his name goes down to posterity crowned with laurel as a public benefactor and a heroic martyr for liberty; if, on the other hand, he fails, his name is branded with infamy as a rebel and history condemns his action as the blackest of all crimes, the crime of disturbing the social order and attempting to overthrow public authority. Nevertheless, we hold strongly that the existing law, whether it is right or wrong must be obeyed, and any one who violates it must be punished according to its provisions. A man for instance, who engages in a conspiracy to overthrow authority, may have had the patriotic or altruistic aim of reforming the existing system, but yet he is a criminal and must be treated as such.

So far there is no difficulty. It is when we are concerned with political agitation that we encounter difficulties. The idea of holding public meetings to make representations to men in authority is nothing new to us in this country. In the Tamil land at least we have always been familiar with what is known as the gathering of a *Maha-Nadu* (great popular gathering or assembly). What is new to us is that Government should make the endeavour to deal with it either by taking measures to prevent it, or to strike at those who have taken part in it.

We have already said that the law as it exists must be obeyed by all. From this it follows that any one who, in addressing a public assembly incites

people to disobey any existing law, is liable to punishment under its provisions. But one who simply discusses the merits and defects of the present system of law or government certainly commits no crime, and ought not to be punished. To punish him is only tantamount to the declaration that, in the opinion of the Government, whatever is is best.—a proposition to which no one can give his assent. All public speakers who keep themselves within the proper limits of criticism ought to be free to expose the faults of law or government as it is. In theory all will easily assent to this proposition, but the question is whether public speakers are responsible for the crimes committed by those who, under the impulse supposed to be received from their utterances, which are in themselves unobjectionable, commit acts which are calculated to bring them within the purview of the criminal law. Such cases are of frequent occurrence, and it does not happen that, in all of them, government resolves to strike at the public speakers or critics themselves. To do so would be to take leave of all reform, and also to render impossible the legitimate endeavour to form a healthy public opinion in favour of reform. In those cases where government strikes at them, experience shows that, in all civilised countries, governments are more often in the wrong than not. We think that public speakers or agitators, so long as they keep within the limits of the law, should be free from all danger and trouble, and that no connection should be established between their utterances and the breaches of law committed by others,—for these latter must be assumed to be able to understand their true import, and so the responsibility lies with them and not with the remoter or unconnected authors of the legitimate and legal criticisms which have either been misunderstood or perverted from their rational aim and intent.

We now pass on to the preventive measures usually taken by Government to suppress public meetings or speakers out of the expectation that, even where certain utterances are unexceptionable in the eye of the law, the impulses emanating, or likely to emanate, from them are likely to result in a violation of the law and public order or in a defiance of public authority. Such preventive measures are usually of two sorts,—deportation or internment. We are strongly of opinion that these measures usually aggravate the very conditions which they are intended to prevent and only tend to weaken the credit and prestige of the Government. Our Anglo-Indian contemporary, the *Madras Mail* says:—"The power of deportation is essential but for rare use, and there can very seldom be a case in which, at any rate after some lapse of time, the main reasons for deportations cannot be given. So, too, with internment." We dissent from this view. In many cases the reasons cannot be stated without prejudice to the interests of Government and the public, and in several others the reasons might, if subjected to rigorous scrutiny, be found to be insufficient or even beside the mark. Where, in consequence of such circumstances or otherwise, the result is loss of prestige to Government, the evil done by the Government's entire policy far outweighs any temporary advantage, real or imaginary, resulting from it. Especially does the prestige of Govern-

ment suffer where the person interned or deported is a man eminent in art or letters, or one who is a popular favourite of some kind.

There is also another serious evil arising from these measures, especially when the Government is unable, for one reason or another, to publish a full and convincing justification of their policy. They very often help to confer a cheap notoriety or martyrdom on even small men. To these their subsequent elevation to the status of national heroes is ample compensation for any temporary inconvenience or injury entailed by the Government's dealing with them.

Lastly, where the opportunity for the popular agitator is furnished by the existence of a felt public grievance, it is the duty of Government to make timely concessions, as such concessions are more effective for purposes of prevention than deportation or internment. In all such cases, repression is always a mistake, and sooner or later the Government have to retreat, slowly or hurriedly according to the nature of the situation created by their own measures, from their original position. This is both humiliating and foolish. A wise Government which has the courage to remove public discontent by devising remedial measures always makes up in substantial strength for any imaginary loss of prestige it might for the time incur. Truly did John Bright say on a memorable occasion,—"*Force is no remedy.*" The true remedy is to remove discontent by conceding the public demand.

Notes and Comments.

The Hon'ble Mr. B. V. Narasimha Iyer is certainly not the first Brahmin who is going to England on what he (or others) may consider to be a public or patriotic purpose. Nor are they right who think that those who go to foreign countries for their own educational progress do not serve the country's interests. Moreover, in these days Hindus who have returned after a residence in foreign countries find no difficulty in getting admission into their own families, and, *to some extent at least*, also in Hindu society. Why, therefore, he should make a fuss about getting public promises of re-admission into caste, which after all might prove in several cases shadowy and misleading, is, we confess, a mystery to us! We do not wish to attribute motives, for we are of opinion that in most cases, men fail to read motives aright. The Hon'ble Mr. Narasimha Iyer ought, as a Hindu to observe the injunctions of the Rishis, and not at all to care what this man or group of men will do. Manu, our greatest teacher of Dharma, says that Dharma alone follows the soul in its progress to other states of existence after we leave this body, and so we must lay by a store of Dharma according to the shastras, and not what our own reason or passion sets a value upon. Even the Veda enjoins on us to follow the precepts of Manu as the "Medicine" for all the evils of life. Hence, our opinion is that Hindus, and especially Brahmins—who are the appointed "guardians of the treasury of Dharma"——must care more for the strict observance of the shastraic ordinances of Dharma than for any purely personal or public aims. There are, also many who, like ourselves, hold that agitation in India is quite enough to secure all our present political aims and more,—that Brahmins should not de-Brahminise themselves further,—that, as men of other Hindu castes are not subject to the same shastraic restrictions, they may be paid their expenses and otherwise encouraged to undertake any political mission or agitation that may be required in order to advance Indian interests in England.

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There are some Brahmans who are strict in their own observances of shastraic custom, but are prepared to see or even encourage, others to violate them, and feel

callous about the consequences to them and others here or hereafter. We think such men behave improperly, and their nonchalant selfishness is reprehensible in the extreme. If the shastras enjoin what is right, we must not only carry out their injunctions in our own daily life, but must disapprove of their violation by others, and even dissuade them from it. This is the right ethical attitude, whether we take the prevailing casuistical view of the West, or that which obtains in India. To act differently shows a sordid and execrable kind of Philistinism of which the consequences, when widespread, are moral deterioration, social disharmony, and political downfall.

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There has been some agitation recently about the conversion of two Brahmin lads to Christianity in Madura and Tinnevelly. Such conversions, though very rare, do take place now and again, and bring much dislocation in the Hindu family and even in the Hindu society. Hence all responsible Hindus should take care that they do nothing which will unsettle the minds of Hindu lads. In these days, however, men are led away by personal considerations, passing emotions, and transient interests of all kinds, and are not inclined to apply the eternal Shastraic test to know which action is right and which is wrong and to what consequences they will lead when we shuffle off this transient mortal coil. When even Brahmins openly violate the injunctions of the Rishis in regard to various matters of daily life,—when they openly follow the bad example of foreigners in matters like dining, smoking, dressing,—when they abandon openly their morning and even twilight worships and prayers and even the fortnightly and annual rites in honor of ancestors,—when they frequent and patronise openly the Y. M. C. A. restaurants,—when they compel even their women to imitate the fashions and habits of foreign women in various matters,—it is no wonder that missionaries are able to influence the minds of their Hindu students by telling them that Christianity is the original source from which these admired institutions of the West have derived their inspiration, and so they must offer the homage which is due to it by becoming converts. It is an unquestionable truth that the home is the source of all lasting inspiration and influence. The home, therefore, must be kept strictly Hindu both in the inner spirit which pervades it and in the exterior forms, fashions, and usages which its older inmates observe. Where this is the case and the Hindu home is, in consequence, kept well-ordered and in accordance with Hindu traditions and authoritative shastraic injunctions, the fear of conversion, or of denationalisation in any form, cannot exist.

* * *

Moreover, the Hindus must realise the fact that they show themselves incapable of self-respect, dishonour their ancient culture, and ruin their fair name when they have to send their children for education to institutions maintained by Christian Missionaries or other foreign agencies out of their own funds and for their own purposes. It is, in our view, a great national disgrace and humiliation that we should not provide funds with unstinted liberality and even profuseness to be able to found our own Hindu Colleges and have them properly manned and managed so that they may retrieve their tarnished reputation in the eyes of civilised men. The Hindu boys, who owe their education to the efforts and sacrifices of the professors of proselytising creeds or those of foreign societies and agencies which are here for the prosecution of their own aims, will come to know, sooner or later, that their own co-religionists had failed to do their duty by them and had allowed themselves to be guided by purely mercenary considerations in sending them to be educated by the enemies of their faith, open and disguised. Most people may, indeed, fail to rise to this high level of dignified self-realisation and self-knowledge. But in these days there are Indians who are prepared to go any lengths rather than allow their pet views, passions, or interests to be frustrated or exposed. Such people,

whether Hindus or others, bring the most deleterious influences to bear on immature minds, with the result that these latter succumb and fall a prey to the unhealthy influences brought to bear on them. The Hindus, in special, ordinarily behave as if it is beneath them to have any leaders of their own,—even in small matters. Even young people—even those who are still students or have only recently left studying at college—want to air their own views in public on all matters and also to have their own organs and organisations for self-expression of the kind which commends itself to them. It is no wonder, then, that, in the midst of the mental moral, and social anarchy now prevading, several plastic young minds get unhinged, and plunge at once into the abyss from pure want of guidance or disbelief in the possibility of receiving any healthy or sane guidance.

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If the Hindus want to improve the existing state of things, they must first regain their own sobriety and stability of mind, and not allow themselves to be thoughtlessly influenced by foreign ideals, organisations, leaders, or misleaders. They must also resolve to consult their own eternal oracles—the Vedas and the Rishis; —and they must not allow foreigners, or Indians trained in irrational methods of foreign interpretation, to interpret for them the ancient sacred records or authorities. They must form societies of their own learned men for investigation, and give wide publicity to the conclusions thus reached. They must also take care not to depart hastily, in the actual practice of daily life, from accepted ideals and standards of conduct and avoid doing or saying anything that would tend to unsettle young and immature minds. They must especially make their home a temple of truth, love, purity, piety, and learning. More than all else, they must make the Hindu materfamilias the power she deserves to be within the portals of the home and efface themselves there altogether. This is the position assigned to her by Manu, for he calls her the *Sri* (or *Lakshmi*) of the home. The Hindu wife and matron is the purest of all gems, and the fairest of all flowers, in the world, and sheds the divine light of her life-giving love all over the home. This fact ought to be appreciated by every Hindu patriarch,—and not only the respect shown to her, but also the power and influence she enjoys in the household ought to be in the fullest measure of accord with it.

A Ramayana Harikatha.

By P. R. Krishnaswami m.a.

Popular amusements! What a world of varied human activity are implied in them. Bear-baiting, bull-baiting, cock-fighting, hawking and falconry, dancing, and theatres and circuses, all are popular amusements and pastimes, and still how they can vary in the reflecting of human qualities! Tell a people's pastimes, one may be tempted to say, and I shall assert their character and qualities and prophesy their destiny.

In India, among the Hindus, the highest and most popular of popular amusements, who will deny, is a Harikatha, the story of God, the Omnipotent and the Eternal? Where do the highest and the lowest congregate with devotion, enthusiasm, love, reverence, and humility, except at a Harikatha? Man, woman, and child alike, how completely they can be charmed, pleased, edified, and contented by a Harikatha! A Harikatha is not a musical performance and still it is musical. Indeed, the witchery of words with the witchery of sense, where else can they be blended to greater effect than at a Harikatha? A Harikatha is not a dancing performance. And yet the grace, the lightness, and quickness of the movement of the limbs of the body, how expressively and aptly they can add effect in the expounding of the Divine Tale of the Harikatha? A Harikatha is the most perfect orchestra of the Hindu genius, not of musical instruments alone, but of the harmony of the raptures of the soul with the raptures of the body and the raptures of the mind.

The leading citizens of Kumbakonam conceived sometime ago the happy idea of running a complete series of Ramayana Harikathas by one of the most reputed Bhagavathars of the South. Such an organisation falling in most harmoniously in the scheme of Hindu life would seem not to need any special mention. But Hindu life has latterly turned to other attractions and distractions too, so much so, that the organisation of a legitimate institution has to be achieved with persevering effort.

The first of the Kathas came on a Monday a few weeks ago. Precisely at half-past four, as advertised, was gathered in the holy precincts of the Sri Ramaswami temple one of the largest and most well-ordered assemblies to listen to a Harikatha on the origin and meaning of the Ramayana. The place was chosen with great appropriateness—in the wide temple verandah running by the open corridor round the shrine of the temple. Nothing of the sordid modern world catches the eye there. All is holy, sanctified ground. All about you, in stone and coloured painting, breathes Faith in the one Great Eternal. The episodes of the Ramayana are painted in colours on the walls in the covered verandah. He who runs can read the great epic of the Hindus visualised there in pictures of the great actions belonging to it. The simple temple verandah needed none of the precautions of modern "ventilation principles." No vulgar windows stare in the face. The sky was bared to you near you, and your vision could extend to the Infinite!

A Harikatha differs from every other form of a popular entertainment by its elaborate preliminaries. After the various musical instruments are attuned and the Song of Praise, Prayer and Invocation sung, the Bhagavathar expounds the (untranslatable) *punyam* to the different classes of his audience, of attending the Katha. The Brahmin can hope thereby to become a prodigy of wisdom and knowledge, the Kshatriya a world-wide Emperor, the Vaisya, the king of his trade, and the Sudra, the pattern of his class. The audience sacrifices none of its Reason when it receives with acclamation such a statement. The thing is, Reason has no place at all there, the audience is united in a single-hearted Faith, and Faith does not question the proportions in which it is itself commended. Then the audience is once again reminded by contract of absorption in worldly affairs, and the much-needed escape into a Harikatha for one's salvation. When Wordsworth wrote:

> The world is too much with us, late and soon,
> Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers,

all Europe might have worshipped him for his truly poetical sentiment, and India might follow too, to praise the inspiration of the lines, and yet it is of the commonest knowledge among the Hindu people. It is just to guard itself from "giving its heart away, a sordid boon," that it has devised numerous vigils, fasts and festivities, and among them Harikathas. In a Harikatha a Hindu audience is visibly transported into a far higher world than this. The melody of music, the humour and good sense, and above all the artistic narrative of the progress of the soul towards immortality, all unite to pluck the hearts of all into a nobler and abstracted world ecstasy.

The Bhagavathar next prefaces to the audience his own modest part in the exposition of the Divine tale. The name of God is the secure ground on which he takes his stand. The name of God pervades all that is in India. Men call each other most frequently in the most hallowed, sweet names of God, and the beggar in the street cries in God's name to get his alms from the householder. The Bhagavathar's modesty is once again couched in hyperbole, but as has been said before, nobody is in a mood to resent such hyperboles. You may presume to add a speck of gold-dust to a mountain of gold, light a farthing candle to add light to the bright sunshine, or enrich the ocean with a pastry gem, rather than the Bhagavathar presume to expound the Divine Tale. But the good man is like a sieve which lets pass away "the faults thick as dust" and retains the few precious things that will be uttered.

And then at last to the Ramayana,—and not even then the Ramayana itself, but its Prologue. The story of Ambarisha, his penance for progeny and for the everlasting grace of God, and God appearing to him to grant his cherished prayers,—the narrative progresses from point to point lightly and rapidly with passion, eloquence, and grace, and alternating in song and speech. The Sanskrit couplets of Valmiki, verses in Tamil, songs from Telugu, tripping Marathi lines from Tukaram or Tulsidoss, all combine to vary the fund of the Harikatha genius. Has not India with all its bewildering diversity of languages still the most striking principle of unity? Is not all the diversity of tongues shaped only for the one common eternal worship of Vishnu? Tulsidoss in Marathi, Kamban in Tamil, or Molla in Telugu, are they not all allied in affectionate and sacred fraternity to the one Valmiki of Bharata Varsha?

In a Harikatha you fully realise the enchanting music and melody of Sanskrit sounds. The simple, seemingly dull and monotonous couplet of Valmiki, what thrill and sublimity does it not acquire in the act of the Bhagavathar. The melody of Telugu, the subtle music of Tamil, and the tripping measure of Marathi, how they all form worthy components in the orchestra of the Hindu Harikatha!

And then the story of King Ambarisha—Vishnu would make trial of the singleness of his devotion to Himself He assumes the form of Indra, the Lord of the Devas, and appearing in his celestial robes, declares himself at the service of Ambarisha. The latter opens his eyes, relating his meditation, but only for a little time; for he could not be enticed into being distracted from meditation on his great God, even if the object of distraction offered itself in the great lord of the immortals himself.

The goddess Lakshmi is by the will of God born as daughter to Ambarisha. The maiden of divine lustre has to be paired in holy wedding. The Sage Narada and his pupil are on a visit to King Ambarisha, and each is smitten with love for the damsel. Sage meet kings, and devotees are admitted to converse with the great God. How frequently in all these we are reminded of the fascinating forms of ancient courtesy, of ancient politeness and ancient worship! The monarch rises from his throne to greet the sages at the Palace entrance, the feet of the guests are washed and all "other ablutions offered." And then, ancient worship, what priceless lessons it should not convey to us for all times! The Bhagavathar formulates with none of the consciousness of the self-importance of a Carlyle, that the world's good depends on the worship of the truly worthy, and that the worship of the unworthy would presage the corruption and fall of the world.

And passing over other details necessary to continue the narrative, let us note just one incident. The sage Narada and his pupil for a time forsake in ignoble pride the faith in the Almighty,—let us say through human temptation. But torn by desire they have again to implore the Almighty for aid. The Almighty smiles and grants the boon. This is the cardinal faith of the Vaishnavite devotee. True worship and single devotion win for all time command over God's eternal favour.

We will stop here in our account. The deep, profound, and enchanting significance of the Hindu Harikatha has been essayed to be brought to popular attention here. If there are people in the world who believe that India's religiosity was only of the past, let them witness a Harikatha, and make their inferences from what they see there. The essence of India to-day is to-day, as it has always been, that of the deeply religious. India is the eternal home of the ecstatic realisation of the great ardent faith in the Omnipotent, benevolent Vishnu. Material desires come over her sons, and petty struggles of human existence may seem to absorb them, but the one deep current of her life is in her Vaishnavite faith. The faith may need new prophets to capture the hearts of India once again, in its enduring peace, and then India will scorn her mundane consciousness, of political reform and industrial development, railways and hos-

pitals, education, and co-operation, and all the hundred other features of unpoetic and ungodly material life.

> "The East bowed low before the blast,
> In silent deep disdain
> She let the legions thunder past
> And plunged in thought again."

Andal's Tiruppavai.

(By V. Bhashyam Iyengar, B.A., B.L.)

(continued)

The poem begins with an extollation by the gopis of the particular month and day in which it was granted to them to reach the Lord unreservedly and lay their hearts bare to Him. The month was Margali, the month which, of all the months, the Lord identified himself with; the month that to the Devas corresponds to our उषस् or early morning (being the last sixth part of the Dakshinayanam, which is their night, preceding the Uttarayanam, which is their day); the month which like the shadow of the Lord, वासुदेवतरच्छाया, is neither too warm nor too cold, नातिशीता न घर्मदा; the month in which Satvam, the first and the highest of the three gunas or principles of Nature, reigns uppermost. And the day was a full-moon day. The day when, out of all eternity, the wandering soul who had strayed so far away from the right path by reason of his selfishness engendered by his ignorance of the true nature of his self, is enabled to understand his folly and turn to the Lord, who in the immensity of His love and affection was never able to give up the erring soul and continued to prevade and follow him unawares as *Antaryami*, even in his crooked ways and sustain him against total annihilation, like unto the fond mother who would not appear before her loved but mad and wicked child, lest its ignorant and foolish rage against her be roused and work its harm on the child, and yet would feed it by an unseen hand, that it may not starve and die and shatter her never-ending hope of its eventual recovery from its temporary malady;—is it not worth engraving in gold? Can it be too highly extolled? It is the only day that counts in life, and exclaimed by Akroora, when he was sent to Gokulam to invite Krishna to Kamsa's Court and accompany Him thereto:

> अद्य मे सफलं जन्म सुप्रभाता च मे निशा ।
> यदुन्निद्राब्जपत्राक्षं विष्णोर्द्रक्ष्याम्यहं मुखम् ॥

It was only natural that the best of months competed to have the honour of containing the day on which the gopis went to the Lord, and the moon lent her highest brilliance to glorify it, because the creation cannot but obey its Author and act in accord with His purpose. The rest of the opening stanza containing a brief summary in somewhat veiled language of, *first*, the nature of the goal or the highest object of human attainment; *second*, how (i.e., through or by what means) it could best be attained; and *third*, the qualification required of an aspirant who wants to reach that goal through that means. "Wealthy girls of the abundance-flowing *Ay-pádi!* the best jewelled ones!", exclaim the more advanced gopis, "the son of Nandagopa, the sharp lancer and severe doer, the lion-cub of Yasoda, the beautiful-eyed, He whose form is so tranquilizing, whose eyes are red like lotus, and whose countenance combines the best in the sun and the moon, Narayana, himself, will surely give us, the *parai*; come forth, those who would engage in this penance to the commendation of the world and wish to have an immersion". The immersion here spoken of is really not the dipping of the gross body into water, which only removes the external and not the internal heat, but the union of the individual self and the Universal, the drowning of the former in the cooling knowledge of the *essence* (स्वरूप), the form (रूप), and the glory (गुण) of the latter. And the real *parai* which they want, and hope to get from the Lord, is as we shall find expressly explained by them later on, everlasting kainkaryam or service, service having no tinge of selfishness, in the object, in the making or in the result. Union with the Lord and everlasting unselfish service at His feet are then the goal or the object of attainment, and the means of attaining it is the Lord Narayana Himself. Who can venture to say that the Karma, (action), the Gnana, (knowledge), the Bhakti (devotion) or even the Prapatti

(self-resignation) of the feeble soul which so much owes its incarnation, its sustenance and its tendencies to the Lord Himself, is the *means* for the attainment of the Heavenly Bliss from which there is no returning, than which there is no higher object to be strived after. The *means* and the *end* could not be so disproportionate. One might as well say that a kingdom granted to a person, was *purchased* by the lime fruit he carried to the donor as a mark of respect. The goal is purely the voluntary gift of the Lord; Karma, Gnana, Bhakti and Prapatti only befit us to be its recipients. Even these are not absolutely necessary. It would be sufficient if we do not deny the very existence of the Lord and run away from him, if we do not pilfer our self and set it up as our Lord, if we do not refuse to receive the gift which He has always been ready and willing, nay, anxious, to make. This is what is conveyed by the exclamation "come forth those who would engage in this penance and wish to have an immersion". The only qualification required of the aspirant is the mind to receive. Let us give up our "I-ness" and submit to the Lord and He will surely take care of the rest. No father ever neglected any son who was not unruly. This was the inestimable jewel of the gopis, this was the wealth and the abundance that filled their village to over-flowing. Can it be otherwise, seeing that the Lord, the Universal Soul, was there present, as Krishna, the son of Nandagopa and pride of Yasoda, with his charming appearance, lotus-like eyes and dazzling countenance burning with love and affection to his devotees.

The second stanza deals with how an aspirant who believes in the attainment of the goal by means of the Lord himself, would behave and what he would do. This is the Prapanna, one who wants to follow the course enjoined by the Lord, in the famous couplet, called the *Charama* (or the last) slokam as it deals with the last and the best means of reaching the Lord :

सर्वधर्मान्परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज ।

अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥

"Resign all Dharmas and consider Me the only means. I shall make you free of all sins. Do not grieve." There has been a good deal of controversy over the real meaning and import of this plain sloka, a good part of which, at least, is in my humble opinion, attributable to the non-conception or mis-conception of the various standpoints from which commentators have looked at the sloka. But let that pass; we will not have anything to do with controversies which do not edify anybody. All are agreed that the man who simply gives up the Dharmas, which are the duties enjoined by the Lord on each individual according to his birth and position in life, is not a Prapanna. Real faith in the Lord as both the means and the end, never tends towards idleness. The observance or doing of the Dharmas without caring for the result, the rooting out of selfishness and individuality in their observance, these are the initial stages. Such observance of the Dharma is called Karma Yoga and is practised by some as the means of reaching the Lord. But the Prapanna's standpoint is different. Not only Karma Yoga but Gnana Yoga nay, not even Bhakti or Prapatti, is to him the means of reaching the Lord. This is why he resigns them all; but he welcomes them in another capacity, as the end itself. Karma Yoga is not now the means of reaching the Lord, but the loving service of the Lord, service for its own sake. Gnana Yoga now merely enlightens the true nature of the individual Self and the Universal or the Lord. Bhakti merges itself into the longing for service which is now the end. And Prapatti, the *acceptance* of the Lord as the means, identifies itself, when it is understood that even such acceptance is not the means but the Lord, with the knowledge of the entirely dependant nature of the individual self on Him. A Prapanna is, therefore, not the hateful idler. Listen, then, to what he would do and what he would avoid. Say the gopis, "we would sing the feet of the supreme Lord who gently sleeps on the Milky Ocean and take no ghee, no milk. We would bathe in the early morning but not paint our eyes or tie our hair with flower. We would not do what great men have not done, or speak evil. We would dispense alms and charity and take pleasure in thus sustaining our-

selves". The keynote for all this will be observed to be complete unselfishness. Ghee and milk, and eye-paint and flower denote luxury, and their enjoyment is entirely foreign to a Prapanna. His whole time is taken up in acclaiming the Lord, who out of his own kindness has been pleased to meet us more than half way by coming down and reclining on the Milky Ocean, and cheerfully serving Him by observing the duties imposed on him according to his birth and station in life and society, for their own sake and not for any further end. A branch of this service, or one of the duties imposed by the Lord on an individual is the giving of charity and alms, the imparting of the light which lies in him to his fellowmen in accordance with his own capacity and ability and the capacity and ability of the recipient.

(*To be continued.*)

The Bhagavad Gita

With an English Exposition

By K. S. Ramaswami Sastri B. A. B. L.

(The substance of the lectures now being delivered at the Students' Sanatana Dharma Sabha, Trichinopoly.)

ADHYAYA I.

(*Continued.*)

अन्ये च बहवः शूरा मदर्थे त्यक्तजीविताः ।

नानाशस्त्रप्रहरणाः सर्वे युद्धविशारदाः ॥ ९ ॥

And many other valiant men who are ready to lay down their lives for my sake, who wield diverse weapons and missiles of war, and who are masters of the art of war.

NOTES :

1. त्यक्तजीविताः There is in this word an undercurrent of suggestion—not voluntary but involuntary and inauspicious—that they had already lost their lives for his sake.

अपर्याप्तं तदस्माकं बलं भीष्माभिरक्षितम् ।

पर्याप्तं त्विदमेतेषां बलं भीमाभिरक्षितम् ॥ १० ॥

Yet our force protected by Bhisma is not sufficient, while their army protected by Bhima is sufficient.

NOTES :

1. अपर्याप्तं has been said to mean (1) insufficient, or (2) unlimited while पर्याप्तं means (1) sufficient, or (2) limited. But the first-mentioned meanings are more in keeping with Duryodhana's character and the general spirit of the descriptions of the contending hosts in this chapter. We have already stated that Duryodhana was inspired by fear. A greater number of heroic leaders who blew on conches with specific names is stated on the side of the Pandavas than on the side of the Kauravas. The blowing of such conches is said to have inspired the Kauravas with fear. Duryôdhana had also a lurking, though mean and unmerited suspicion, that Bhishma favoured the other side. It is further noteworthy that Duryodhana, though his army consisted of eleven *Akshowhinis*, while that of the Pandavas consisted only of seven *Akshowhinis*, had already called the latter as महतीं चमूम् (great army). He had already described the great warrior on the side of the Pandavas as equal in prowess to Bhima and Arjuna. Above all, there was the fact of Sri Krishna being on the side of the Pandavas.

अयनेषु च सर्वेषु यथाभागमवस्थिताः ।

भीष्ममेवाभिरक्षन्तु भवन्तः सर्व एव हि ॥ ११ ॥

Therefore, let all of you, each stationed in his place in his respective division, guard Bhishma.

NOTES :

The presence and inspiration of the generalissimo are important factors in warfare everywhere and especially so in oriental warfare.

तस्य संजनयन्हर्षं कुरुवृद्धः पितामहः ।

सिंहनादं विनद्योच्चैः शंखं दध्मौ प्रतापवान् ॥ १२ ॥

Then the valiant and aged grandsire of the Kurus (Bhishma) blew loudly on his conch Simhanada (of the lion's roar) in order to cheer him up.

NOTES :

1. Bhishma saw Duryodhana's faintness of heart from afar and blew a high and loud note on his conch to hearten him.

2. The verse shows that Bhishma was valiant (प्रतापवान्) though old, unlike Duryodhana who was a coward though young.

3. तस्य. Some commentators say that it may refer to the army of the Kauravas, or to the army of the Pandavas as a sign of the commencement of military operations and an assurance that they will be given an opportunity of showing their military prowess, or to Sri Krishna as the occasion—divinely predestined—for manifesting the object and the glory of His incarnation.

ततः शङ्खाश्च भेर्यश्च पणवानकगोमुखाः ।
सहसैवाभ्यहन्यन्त स शब्दस्तुमुलोऽभवत् ॥ १३ ॥

Then conches and kettledrums, tabors and drums, and the cow-horns were simultaneously sounded ; and the noise became deafening uproar.

ततः श्वेतैर्हयैर्युक्ते महति स्यन्दने स्थितौ ।
माधवः पाण्डवश्चैव दिव्यौ शङ्खौ प्रदध्मतुः ॥ १४ ॥
पाञ्चजन्यं हृषीकेशो देवदत्तं धनंजयः ।
पौण्ड्रं दध्मौ महाशंखं भीमकर्मा वृकोदरः ॥ १५ ॥
अनन्तविजयं राजा कुन्तीपुत्रो युधिष्ठिरः ।
नकुलः सहदेवश्च सुघोषमणिपुष्पकौ ॥ १६ ॥

Then Krishna and Arjuna, seated in a great chariot to which white horses were yoked, blew their divine conches—Hrishikesa (Krishna) blowing the conch Pânchajanya and Dhananjaya (Arjuna) blowing the conch Devadatta. Vrikodara (Bhima) of terrible deeds blew the mighty conch Poundra. King Yudhishthira, the son of Kunti, blew the conch Anantavijaya. Nakula and Sahadeva blew the conches Sughosha and Manipushpaka.

NOTES :

1. माधव means the lord of *Sri*, the goddess of fortune. The word hints that success was to be on the side of the Pandavas.

2. The separate mention of the warriors and their conches in the army of the Pandavas shows its real might in spite of its smallness of numbers. It was fighting on the righteousness; the noblest chivalry of the time was on its side, and the grace of God was upon it. (*To be continued*)

Laity *versus* Medical Faculty.

BY S. P. THIAGARAJAN.

Writing to the Editor of this journal, soon after its inception, I had given it as my opinion that the Tuberculosis Institute at Madras is a gigantic waste of public money. And it was my original resolve to deal with this in the *Pencillings* that appear in these pages. But the controversy on this subject in the daily Press, to some extent lightens my task. It has been said that, when a certain set of men fall out, honest men get their own : and this controversy should have shown the careful reader something of the way in which remedies are bolstered up by the Faculty. It will have strongly confirmed my contention that logic is not among the strong points of the Faculty of Medicine.

Tuberculin has a strange history of its own—which the reader will see for himself in subsequent issues. I shall prove from unimpeachable medical testimony that the whole question of "tuberculin" treatment is in the region of antiquity and doubt: that the various tuberculin dispensaries, now sought to be established throughout the land, though they may feed the hungry members of the Faculty, are in reality "tuberculous" dispensaries. All this will be for readers of our subsequent issues. The present article has altogether a different genesis. Most laymen who know anything of the quackery of Western medicine would be stung to the quick by the audacious assertion, regarding laymen and medical questions, of the present Director of the Tuberculosis Institute at Madras. Though his short letter to the "Hindu" is, between the lines, confession of utter defeat, he has not the grace to retire modestly, but should indulge in dexterous mud-slinging. But, before I have fully done with the claims advanced for Tuberculin, the wonderful Doctor, as well as the Faculty, shall know that the Laity, whose hard-earned money is squandered on maintaining an army consisting mostly of quacks, have as much and still greater right to decide on controverted medical questions. And were it not for "the language of nonsense" which they invent

for every new remedy and for every disease they cannot diagnose, the Laity can give some points to the wonderful Faculty in the matter of curing disease.

We do not wish to hurt or to wound the susceptibilities of medical men. The art of healing appeals to mankind as nothing else can. Its most successful achievements have been accomplished when pursued *on Nature's lines and with Nature's aid.* Medical progress has been, and is, hampered with a curriculum and pharmacopaeia, both of which are not only out of date, but are overladen with and burdened by cults and quackeries. Many of these modern practices are worse than anything we hear of in the witcheries and enchantments of the past. If they could be considered apart from the prestige, *esprit de corps*, etiquette, and false professional glamour by which they are surrounded and upheld, they would not only be scouted as insane and preposterous, but rejected and condemned by the profession itself.

The truth is, there are fashions in medicine as in millinery; they are started; they flourish; they pass away; but the permanence of any medical fashion might be secured if fortified by endowment. Of course, it would be absurd to charge medical men individually with defending; say, vaccination, because of the gain attached thereto. But as Hobbes observed of mankind in the gross, "Even the axioms of Geometry would be disputed if their interests were peculiarly affected by them." And as Mr. Balfour once observed, "Everyone who will look through the history of medical opinion as regards public health during the last fifty years, and the amount of money spent in obedience to medical opinion, will find as great a crop of errors and as large an expenditure of public money which subsequent knowledge has shown to be ill-spent as anything connected with the Army and Navy......as long as the House of Commons is not entirely composed of men possessing Solomon's wisdom, so long shall we, acting on the best opinion we can obtain and which science shall give, commit errors which the science of the next day will say have been of the grossest description." In the face of such a statement, we think even Dr. P. S. Chandrasekhar will lose nothing by being more modest in his claims for tuberculin in "specialist" hands. But the mischief of it all lies not so much in Dr. Chandrasekhar, nor even with the Faculty. It is all due to the State's "infamous record of calamitious blundering" in matters of public health: Our readers know that "The State Medical Service in Mesopotamia, Gallipoli and elsewhere in this war has, been a scandal that cried to heaven."

As an English contemporary very pertinently remarks, the State "has committed its conscience and common-sense into the case of a close corporation of medicine men, the most narrow, bigoted and unscrupulous of trade unions, which it has endowed with an unhealthy monopoly of prestige and practice and profit; a parasitic profession making its living from disease and therefore dominated and biassed, consciously or unconsciously, by that essential fact: a body which has attained such sinister power that we have lately seen it actually defy the injunctions of Parliament in the matter of recruiting. It has even repeatedly vetoed an attempt by the War Office to employ an *unqualified* though experienced practitioner in the repair of broken soldiers."

Such a body acquires an almost irresistible momentum and independence of its own and would be able to go like a steam-roller over dissentient minorities. And it was the consciousness of belonging to such a body that emboldened Doctor Chandrasekhar to administer what he probably thought a rebuke to another medical gentleman. If I understood him correctly, even Dr. M. C. Nanjunda Rao only objected to the present location of the dispensary; and he advocated, with his professional instinct, the opening of more such dispensaries in the country—though he had a word to say against the danger of tuberculin being used indiscriminately and by non-specialists and owing to an entirely wrong diagnosis. All these are the baneful results of the Government lending their ears too easily to the trade union which is its medical adviser. These evil results we see most in England, and they are rapidly invading India. To

cite one example, "the voice of the Eugenist Crank is heard in the land, calling for all sorts of enactments which aim at the regimentation and supervision of the proletariat. As it is, the poor man can hardly call his soul his own, let alone his body."

But for us of Madras, rightly or wrongly, and whatever the wails of Dr. Chandrasekhar, tuberculin has been translated to politics and made every man's business; whilst the interest created by the endowment of a Tuberculosis Institute deprives its medical advocates of judicial authority in the controversy. Rather than lecture to us of the laity, let that redoubtable son of Euscalapius realise that as an interested party, he is out of court in this controversy. It would be as reasonable to expect slave-holders to denounce slavery, or protected manufacturers to advocate free trade as for those whose professional prestige and advantage are involved in a particular practice to speak the truth about it. Let us be reasonable. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? We should not, indeed, require of average human nature the virtue of its rarer forms. Like all monopolies, tuberculin and tuberculosis institutes endowed by the State, will be defended with unanimity from within, and must be attacked and overthrown from without—nevertheless be it said with *some* assistance from within, and that assistance most efficient, as our readers will see by and by. But, say they, it is a medical question and we may leave it to medical men to settle—it is the *vis inertia* of the community that speaks. And again it will be said that a majority of physicians approve of it. To the first apology for thoughtlessness, we say—"the Tuberculosis Institute is paid for out of the public pocket, and whatever the evidence adverse to its usefulness, it will be upheld by those who profit by it. If those who pay do not object, those who are paid never will. In face of common human experience, we cannot hold it will be otherwise." To those who take the second objection, we quote the opinion of Professor Dobson, M.D., Professor of Physiology, Pathology and Hygiene, New York, who says:—"A majority of physicians does not matter, because this majority once opposed Harvey's discovery about the circulation of the blood, this great majority has, a century ago, bled and slaughtered thousands of people, this great majority has always hindered each true progress in medical science."

For the present we have done with the subject, though not with Doctor Chandrasekhar. The pathological aspect of every medical question is regarded as hallowed ground; but, even a "man in the street," as Mr. Balfour once observed, may sometimes possess knowledge equal to that of a Cabinet Minister. Although I lay no claim to such special knowledge as the Doctors, it is yet possible to collate the views of scientific minds. And if these lines should catch his eye, we would earnestly entreat Dr. P. S. Chandrasekhar to ponder deep on the wise words of Southwood Smith. "If with the *Times* newspaper I have condemned dogma as out of place in medicine, if I have argued for breadth of view and philosophic insight against a narrow specialism and a too rigid professionalism, it is not with a desire to disparage the magnificent and industrious researches into all departments of pathology which have become so striking a feature of modern times. It is rather that I may emphasise the greater necessity there is that the true student of sanitary science should, like Faraday's true philosopher, be '*a man willing to listen to every suggestion, but determined to judge for himself. He should not be biassed by appearances, have no favourite hypothesis, be of no school, and in doctrine have no master. He should not be a respecter of persons; truth should be his primary object. If to these qualities be added industry, he may indeed hope to walk within the veil of the temple of Nature*'. He may be the object of ridicule by the ignorant, or the target for scorn and criticism from those whose vested interests his duties require him to disturb; but the true sanitarian intent on enduring work will not suffer such to distract him from his task. The temple of Hygeia needs many hands and various arts to complete it and adorn it, and in the building of that stately edifice *each one of us may play a humble part.*" The Italics are mine throughout.

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